

QA-361
Blackbeard
Queenstown vicinity
Private

circa 1898

The house Frederic Emory built at Blackbeard's Bluff was probably a unique example of pre-Georgian Colonial Revival architecture in Queen Anne's County. It is representative of the early phase of that movement, reflecting the late-Victorian fascination with early America. The mainstream of this movement followed Georgian and Classical modes, but interest remained high in rustic interpretations of late-19th century perceptions of the early colonial period. It is interesting to note that a contemporary newspaper article acknowledges this phenomenon, and compares the log house at Blackbeard to similar newly constructed homes in the Adirondacks. Unfortunately the house was destroyed by fire in 1935.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Blackbeard

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

South bank of Chester River

CITY, TOWN

Queenstown

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel G. Caputo

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Box 184

CITY, TOWN

Grasonville

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21638

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: CWC 62

Folio #: 464

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

Q4-361

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☒ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Blackbeard is the site of a house built in the late 19th century for Frederick Emory, a noted diplomat and statesman, and an early and authoritative chronicler of Queen Anne's County history. The house was built at Blackbeard's Bluff, located on the south bank of the Chester River approximately two miles west of Queenstown. The house was sited near the bank of the river, on relatively high ground adjoining the north side of Walsey Creek. Completed around the turn of the century, it served as Emory's residence until his death in 1908. The property has remained in the family, but the house was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1935. Fortunately, a number of photographs have survived, illustrating the house and farm buildings. An interesting newspaper clipping has also survived. This was published in the Centreville Record April 23, 1898 and includes a fairly complete description of the

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

QA-361

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George Davidson and
Heck Morris

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house Frederic Emory built at Blackbeard's Bluff was probably a unique example of pre-Georgian Colonial Revival architecture in Queen Anne's County. It is representative of the early phase of that movement, reflecting the late-Victorian fascination with early America. The mainstream of this movement followed Georgian and Classical modes, but interest remained high in rustic interpretations of late 19th century perceptions of the early colonial period. It is interesting to note that the contemporary newspaper article acknowledges this phenomenon, and compares the log house at Blackbeard to similar newly constructed homes in the Adirondacks.

Emory's interest in history had already been clearly demonstrated by the extensive

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Emory, Frederick. Queen Anne's County, Maryland
Baltimore, 1950.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

5/21/79

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

house. According to this article, the tract was purchased from a Mr. Davidson, and consisted of roughly 140 acres of land. The house was apparently nearing completion at the time the article was published, and the anonymous writer noted that the house was built of log, "a novel structure...planned after houses that are now in general use in the Adirondacks and intended to be like the old homes of the first settlers in colonial times..."

The description of the house is quite thorough and has therefore been quoted extensively, beginning with an acknowledgement to the architect:

Mr. George Davidson deserves great credit for the architectural design, and with his assistant, Mr. Heck Morris, the design has been skillfully carried out as the work attests.

Both the outside and inside walls of the house are built of gum logs sawed on two sides, bringing the logs their entire length to one thickness so that when they were layed one on the other they fit close

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

and no blocking was required between them. The bark is left on the other sides giving to the interior walls of the house pretty grey walls. The outside of the house will be rough coated with cement to preserve the logs from decay by the weather, but no change will be made on the inside walls, Mr. Emory preferring the bark finish; indeed it looks surprisingly well.

The first floor consists of a hallway through the entire building with a parlour and dining room on the left and a kitchen on the right. The flooring is of walnut cut in planks about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. The second story consists of servant's rooms over the kitchen. The main building second story consists of four bed rooms and there will be two finished bed rooms in the attic. The floor will be of oak on both second and third story. All the finishings on the doors and window frames, &c, will

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION

be oak. The kitchen wing of the house will have a hip roof. The roof over the main building will be of Gothic structure, being put on at an acute angle. The windows in the house are small and will be windowed with small panes of glass as in olden times. In each gable end in the attic is a diamond shaped window. The front entrance to the hall-way is through a vestibule arch supported by colonial pillars. The west entrance to the hall will be through a plain door.

I understand a porch will be built on the west end, which will greatly improve the building. The contour of the whole building is unique and attractive, and the house will be as warm as a brick house in winter and much dryer, whilst in summer it will prove cooler than either a brick house or an ordinary frame one, as the logs covered with cement will prove poor conductors of heat. The main building is 36x22 feet. The roofing will all be of cypress shingles.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION

Of the photographs known to have survived, five are of particular note. The first is a three-quarter view of the house, probably taken from due south of the main house. This photograph may be found in the Edwin Brown papers at the Centreville Public Library (Volume 7B, page 78), and probably dates to circa 1912. The exterior closely conforms to the description, with stucco walls, a diamond window in the half-timbered gable, and one story porches.

The remaining photographs are in the possession of the Caputo family, descendants of Emory and the present owners of Blackbeard. These include a view of the house from a point only a few yards to the east of the photograph just described, a postcard showing the house from the Chester River, and a snapshot of the fireplace. Also of interest is a photograph of the farm buildings, dated 1938. The most extraordinary of these is the view of the fireplace. The walls are exactly as they were described, tightly fitted logs with the bark left on. Furthermore, it is possible to determine that this rough "frontier" theme, executed with unbarked gum logs, was expanded to include mantels and decorative trim.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.5 DESCRIPTION

Of the farm buildings visible in the dated photograph, the barn is certainly the most interesting. It is frame, with a very steep roof that sweeps down to within six or seven feet of the ground, surmounted by a small square cupola with a pyramidal roof and a wooden finial, all lending a rather Gothic air to an otherwise bucolic scene.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

and authoritative series of articles he had written during the 1880's, detailing the early history of the county. These were eventually gathered together by the Maryland Historical Society and were published in 1950. It is not surprising, therefore, that Emory would choose a Colonial Revival mode for his retirement home, or that he would disdain the rigid formality of Georgian Revival.

Frederic Emory died in 1908, and is buried in a grove of trees on the north bank of Walsey Creek, a few hundred yards from the site of his home. His grave is marked with a large, unfinished white stone, and is enclosed by a low wall constructed of round stones from the Chester River. The stone marking the grave is inscribed:

Sacred
to the memory of
Frederic Emory
1853-1908





QA-361 Blackbeard, before destruction
by fire in 1930's.
Copy from photo in possession
of family of Daniel Caputo, A town



QA-361 Blackbeard, interior
of Emory's house.

~~Left~~ Copy from photo
in possession of present
owner, Daniel Caputo



QA-³⁶¹~~362~~ Blackbeard - farmyard

Early photograph, taken
c. 1930's or earlier.

Copy made from original
in possession of present
owner, Daniel Caputo